UNIVERSITY OF
LINCOLN

SECRETARIAT ACADEMIC POLICY SUMMARY SHEET

NAME OF ACADEMIC POLICY:	**Student Support and Tutoring Policy**
PURPOSE OF POLICY AND WHOM IT APPLIES TO:	The policy applies to all academic and professional services staff. The policy sets out a framework for a network of support for all undergraduate and postgraduate students.
RESPONSIBLE BOARD/ COMMITTEE WITH ROUTE OF APPROVAL:	Academic Board originally approved the policy on 10 December 2008 and revised it on 28 March 2012, 16 January 2013, 24 June 2014, November 2019 and July 2022
LEAD STAFF MEMBER RESPONSIBLE FOR ITS UPDATE:	University Senior Tutor
STAFF AND STUDENTS CONSULTED IN DEVELOPING POLICY:	The policy was originally considered and developed by members of the Student Life Working Group, Academic College and Student Experience Committee. The policy is currently overseen by the Education and Student Life Committee (successor to the Student Experience Committee). There are student representatives on the Education and Student Life Committee and Academic Board which considered the revised policy.
POLICY FINALLY APPROVED BY:	Academic Board on 10 December 2008. Latest revisions approved by Academic Board on 14 October 2009, 28 March 2012, 16 January 2013, 24 June 2014, 3 April 2019 and July 2022.
DATE OF IMPLEMENTATION:	10 December 2008 with subsequent revisions circulated to key members of staff.
DETAIL OF DISSEMINATION:	The policy is circulated to relevant staff shortly after each Academic Board approval and is currently available on the Secretariat's portal site.
PROPOSED DATE OF REVIEW	To be reviewed annually.
SECRETARIAT OFFICER – MAIN CONTACT:	Officer to the Education and Student Life Committee
DATE	July 2022

Student Support and Tutoring – Personal Tutors

Principles

The defining principle of the University's Student Support and Tutoring Policy is that all students on taught programmes, including postgraduates (but excluding online programmes), will be assigned a named member of academic staff who is responsible for general academic, pastoral and career support throughout the entirety of their programme.

This person will be referred to as the student's Personal Tutor. The Personal Tutor may be directly involved in teaching the student, however, the role of the Personal Tutor should be seen as independent from their teaching responsibilities. For online programmes, learners will be supported by a staff member who undertakes this role for each module.

The mechanism of delivery of personal tutoring is outlined in the **University of Lincoln Personal Tutoring Framework** (Appendix 1.)

In addition, the University advocates the following principles:

- student support is a collective responsibility and every member of academic staff may potentially be a Personal Tutor;
- no student seeking help from any member of staff should be unreasonably refused or rebuffed;
- all support should be directed towards securing students' best interests; and
- personal tutoring is considered to be a two-way, collaborative relationship whereby students are expected to invest time and effort into making it a success in the same way as staff are.

Student engagement with Personal Tutors is as important as schools making the support available. The University will introduce the Personal Tutor role to students through its pre-arrival communications. Where possible Schools should complement this before the start of term and during the first few weeks, such as through Getting Started, Welcome Week and other University level initiatives.

School level tutorial provision should be integrated with ongoing projects such as the *Lincoln First Year and the Career Readiness Framework* and other operational priorities as directed through the Senior Tutor Forum. Personal tutoring will also be explicit in the Student Charter and other official documentation.

Consistency of Implementation

In order to ensure that all students have equal access to the support they need, and in particular that all students new to the University (whether post- or undergraduate) are made to feel comfortable with their study, it is important that all Colleges and Schools adopt a model from the University of Lincoln Personal Tutoring Framework for delivery of personal tutoring and endorse the same underlying principles. Student support and tutoring provision should be viewed as integral to the student experience and is the appropriate vehicle to introduce local

measures to ensure that all students are able to realise their full potential.

However, this policy should not be seen as rigid in respect of any variation to suit local need e.g. the type of provision established for distance learners/students on placement; to reduce barriers to attainment which may be experienced by some groups of students.

For example, the content of tutoring sessions may well vary according to the demands of the subject of the programme, and their number and timing may well vary according to the organisation of the programme, its size and coherence and in local initiatives to promote equality of attainment. Schools may wish to supplement academic support with Year Tutors or other local variations.

Postgraduate Taught Students

Postgraduate taught students should be made to feel comfortable with their new level of study, including the different skills set required to undertake a postgraduate programme. Schools should ensure that an appropriate model from the University of Lincoln Personal Tutoring Framework is implemented for Postgraduate Taught Students.

Personal Tutors of postgraduate students should familiarise themselves with available induction and training programmes. In addition, Personal Tutors should seek to encourage student awareness and participation in the range of activities and initiatives designed to facilitate a supportive postgraduate culture.

Support for research students is articulated in the University's policy on research student supervision**.**

Senior Tutor Role

Senior Tutors are responsible, under the guidance of Heads of School or Directors of Teaching and Learning, for the co-ordination and enhancement of personal tutor support to taught students and to provide support for Personal Tutors.

Senior Tutors will ensure that School level student support and tutorial provision meets or exceeds the expectations of the Student Support and Tutoring Policy. Senior Tutors will be familiar with the support offered to students by central support departments (i.e. Library, Wellbeing/Student Support and the Careers Service) and will make their teams of Personal Tutors aware of any relevant information.

Senior Tutors also collectively form the Senior Tutors' Forum, which, via collaboration with LALT, shapes and shares good practice across Schools.

Senior Tutor Role Descriptor

Personal Tutor Role

The Personal Tutor's primary business within this support system is to develop a knowledge and engaged understanding of a specific number of students, and to be the first line contact for them in terms of academic advice, pastoral care, careers support and related matters. Where specialised support is needed by their tutees, Personal Tutors will direct them to the appropriate support department.

Key tutor liaison channels will be with the School's Senior Tutor, Programme Leaders, Module Co-ordinators(and possibly Year Tutors), Careers and Employability advisors and Student Advisors in Student Services.

The role of Personal Tutor is to provide academic guidance, pastoral care, careers guidance and support to students within their tutor group. This includes a responsibility to:

- Help their students settle into the University and develop their awareness of higher level study.
- Support students to identify where their strengths and weaknesses are in terms of academic study skills and take up opportunities to develop these, such as through learning development workshops offered by The Library or the International College.
- Support students to reflect holistically on the various pieces of feedback they have received formally and informally on assessed work, and identify steps they can take to improve their performance in future assessments and move into the next grade band (i.e. from a 2:2 to a 2:1).
- Support students to consider their career ambitions and how they can make the most of the support on offer to achieve those ambitions.
- Encourage students to engage with extra-curricular opportunities beyond their programme to develop transferable skills, build social networks and contribute to the development of the university.
- Hold regular progress meetings to discuss the progress of each student.
- Offer an accessible point of contact for queries about academic or professional progress.
- Provide a point of referral to appropriate support services, where required.
- On notification of a tutee's non-attendance seek to discuss the issue with the student.

Personal Tutors will be assigned to a group of students, and will stay with them for the length of the programme. Wherever possible (and subject to knowledge of the identities of their tutees being made available to them) it is good practice for Personal Tutors to establish contact with their new tutees prior to the start of their programme so that students know a friendly face upon arrival at university. This should be followed up with an introductory meeting in the first week where the focus should be on supporting students to settle in and feel part of the University community.

Personal Tutors will hold at least one individual meeting per semester . Group tutorials will be timetabled as standard across the University.

Personal Tutors will, in agreement with their tutees, keep a record of the dates and nature of meetings.

[Personal Tutor Role Descriptor](#)

Support for Personal Tutors

The Personal Tutor role is recognised by the University as an important one that requires dedicated time and support. Colleges and Schools are expected to allocate sufficient hours as part of the academic workload planning model and reflect the role in job descriptions when recruiting staff.

The coordination and development of Personal Tutors is the responsibility of the Senior Tutor in each School/department. Senior Tutors will be appointed by Heads of School and will themselves have this commitment recognised as part of their role, the workload allocation reflecting the size of their team, number of students and any local complexities of the role.

The University, through the Lincoln Academy of Learning and Teaching (LALT) and the University Senior Tutor, will support Senior Tutors in their role and will work via Senior Tutors to develop the personal tutoring system as a whole. LALT will also facilitate support in the form of

resources, training and events directly to Personal Tutors and via schools' Senior Tutors across the University.

All staff who are new to the Personal Tutor role are expected to be knowledgeable about the range of relevant University policies and central support services available to support them and their students. They should engage in training and materials provided by the University before taking on the role, and update themselves as necessary.

Central student support services, such as the Advice Service, Careers and Employability, Accommodation and Students' Union services, will ensure clear and well promoted channels of communication for Personal Tutors to seek advice or support.

Implementation

Each Head of School has ultimate responsibility for ensuring an excellent student experience of personal tutoring in their school in line with the University of Lincoln Personal Tutoring Framework. This is likely to be delivered in practice by Senior Tutors with the support of LALT and College Directors of Education.

A Senior Tutors Forum chaired by the University Senior Tutor will provide a platform for support and for ensuring the delivery of this policy. The University Senior Tutor will work with the members of the Senior Tutors Forum and will report regularly to the Education and Student Life Committee, on progress towards developing and maintaining personal tutor support that aligns with this policy.

Review

The Education and Student Life Committee (in the person of the University Senior Tutor) will have responsibility for the annual on-going review and writing an annual report on the University wide execution of the Student Support and Tutoring Policy. This report will be formally discussed and responded to by College Boards. This will be informed by students' evaluation of personal tutor support through relevant surveys as well as on-going dialogue with Student Representatives.

Appendix 1 – University of Lincoln Personal Tutoring Framework

At the University of Lincoln, various approaches are taken to the delivery of personal tutoring. Programme-specific factors require the implementation of models appropriate to each School. This framework sets out four key models identified as good practice by the University Senior Tutor team and Senior Tutors across the university.

The framework represents models for non- credit bearing personal tutoring. Students have provided positive feedback to Senior Tutors on the ability to engage in learning, skills and personal development without the requirement of assessment-based work. Within Schools, Senior Tutors should work with Heads of School and other teaching and learning leads to identify the model most appropriate to the support needs of students. This may involve consultation with Directors of Teaching and Learning, Student Engagement Leads, Programme Leaders, Employability Leads and Student Reps. On identifying the model suitable to the School, Senior Tutors will lead on the adaptation and implementation of the model. All group sessions should be timetabled, and Personal Tutors should be workloaded for all session types.

Where some Schools choose to adopt approaches significantly exceeding the contact time proposed in the models below, this should be a decision made at a local level with Head of School approval.

Flex Model	1-2-1 Model	Group Model	PSRB Model
This model combines group and 1- 2-1 personal tutoring delivery. In the first semester of each academic year, Personal Tutors will deliver at least two group sessions. In the second semester of each academic year, at least two 1-2-1 meetings should be scheduled with each student. Students' Personal Tutors remain the first point of contact for support via email or 1-2-1 appointments on request.	The 1-2-1 Model offers the delivery of 1-2-1 personal tutoring with students throughout each academic year. Each student in a School adopting this model should receive at least 2 x 1-2-1 meetings with their Personal Tutor at Levels 4, 5 and 6, per semester. The following is recommended: Level 4: 3 x 1-2-1 meetings Level 5: 2 x 1-2-1 meetings Level 6: 2 x 1-2-1 meetings Group sessions are not required in this model. Students' Personal Tutors remain the first point of contact for support via email or 1-2-1 appointments on request.	This model is for predominant group based personal tutoring delivery. Schools adopting this model should deliver group sessions as follows as a minimum: Level 4 x 3 sessions per semester Level 5 x 2 sessions per semester Level 6 x 2 session per semester Schools adopting this model must ensure that students are offered a minimum of 1 x 1-2-1 meeting with their Personal Tutor per semester, in addition to the group based provision. Students' Personal Tutors remain the first point of contact for support via email or 1-2-1 appointments on request.	Professional Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) are external bodies which accredit, recognise and approve programmes that lead to a professional or vocational qualification or exemption from a professional examination. Some PSRB accredited programmes contain requirements for personal tutoring. In these cases, personal tutoring should be delivered on the basis of these requirements. If the regulated programme does not contain mandatory requirements related to personal tutoring, it is expected that personal tutoring is provided via one of the other models in this framework, to be selected by the School

Group Personal Tutoring

A flexible approach can be taken to personal tutoring with Schools focusing on different areas of personal and academic development as appropriate to the needs of students. Within year groups, group sessions should provide all students with an opportunity to access support in the same areas of development to ensure parity in the overall personal tutoring experience. For group delivery, Senior Tutors may provide year group themes for Personal Tutors to follow with supporting delivery materials.

For example: Level 4 - Supporting transition to university and developing study skills

Level 5 - Employability and developing skills for working like

Level 6 - Wellbeing and independent learning

Supporting delivery materials may include PowerPoint slides, video content, and interactive activities.

The developmental needs of students within different Schools may be aligned more closely to their programmes. As such, Senior Tutors should work with teaching and learning leads to identify an appropriate thematic approach.

Senior Tutors may also want to consider the mechanism of delivery of group sessions. Group sessions may be delivered online or F2F. A clear rationale for the mechanism of delivery should be agreed within Schools and communicated by Senior Tutors in their Personal Tutoring Model Report.

1-2-1 Personal Tutoring

1-2-1 personal tutoring provides students with an opportunity to engage with their Personal Tutors on an individual basis. During such meetings, Personal Tutors may talk to students about their academic and personal progress, including identifying areas where students may need support. Personal Tutors may find it useful to structure 1-2-1 personal tutoring by encouraging the use of reflective practice. There are various models of reflection which students can use to think about their own progress and development with their Personal Tutor's support. These include, but are not limited to, the following examples:

- ERA Cycle
- Driscoll's What Model
- Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle Gibb's Reflective Cycle

Resources for reflection can be found at <u>Learning at Lincoln</u>.

All students must be offered a minimum of one 1-2-1 Personal Tutor meeting per semester, regardless of the model implemented.

Postgraduate Personal Tutoring

At postgraduate level, students may require different approaches to personal tutoring to address their support needs. As such, Schools may choose to select different models from the framework for Undergraduate and Postgraduate students. Postgraduate students should be offered a minimum of one 1-2-1 Personal Tutor meeting per semester, regardless of the model implemented.

Guidance on Leadership for Senior Tutors

Senior Tutors act as a primary point of contact for Personal Tutors within the School, offering leadership and guidance on matters relating to student progress and welfare, including being available to advise on unusual or complex issues within the remit of that provision.

To provide leadership to Personal Tutors, Senior Tutors may include the following actions in their role:

- Organise an annual meeting of Personal Tutors at the beginning of an academic year to discuss plans for personal tutoring
- Signpost Personal Tutors to the appropriate training
- Provide guidance on how challenging or complex cases should be escalated
- Update on institutional initiatives relating to personal tutoring and student support
- Establish year group subject themes where group sessions are part of the delivery model to enable Personal Tutors to communicate the purpose of the sessions for the year to students, and to avoid repetition in content delivery across the year groups
- Provide materials to Personal Tutors which may include group activities and supporting resources for 1-2-1 sessions